

**The Report of the
Accreditation Visiting Team**

**Mount Logan Middle School
875 North 200 East
Logan, Utah 84321**

March 28-29, 2006



**Utah State Office of Education
250 East 500 South
P.O. Box 144200
Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4200**

**THE REPORT OF THE
VISITING TEAM REVIEWING**

**Mount Logan Middle School
875 North 200 East
Logan, Utah 84321**

March 28-29-2006

UTAH STATE OFFICE OF EDUCATION

**Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Public Instruction**

**DIVISION OF
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AND SCHOOL SUCCESS**

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Salt Lake City, Utah

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FOREWORD

The major purpose of the accreditation process is to stimulate school growth and improvement so as to increase student achievement.

In these efforts, the school staff makes a comprehensive evaluation of the school's programs, operations, and results. The school determines how actual practices align to stated objectives and resulting outcomes. It is a three-phased evaluation: (1) self-evaluation, (2) on-site evaluation by an external team of educators, and (3) implementation using units of the evaluation to improve the school by effecting thoughtful change.

The evaluation, March 28-29, 2006, was conducted because of the school's desire to ensure quality education for all students in the school, and to increase student achievement.

The entire staff of Mount Logan Middle School is commended for the time and effort devoted to studying and evaluating the various facets of the total program and to preparing the materials used by the visiting team. The excellent leadership given by Principal Daniel Johnson is also commended.

The staff and administration are congratulated for their desire for excellence at Mount Logan Middle School, and also for the professional attitude of all members of the group, which made it possible for them to see areas of weakness and strength and to suggest procedures for bringing about improvements.

While these recommendations may be used to solicit financial support to acquire some of the materials, equipment, and services needed to carry out a more effective program, it is even more important that the faculty and administration utilize them as they continue to evaluate and modify course offerings and administrative and classroom procedures to more dramatically increase student achievement at Mount Logan Middle School.

Patti Harrington, Ed.D.
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction

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MOUNT LOGAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATION AND STAFF

School Administration

Daniel N. Johnson Principal
Douglas W. Beach Assistant Principal
Sundee Ripley-Ware Assistant Principal

Counseling

Teri Painter 8th Grade Counselor
Chris Nelson 7th Grade Counselor
Maggi Straley 6th Grade Counselor

Support Staff

Elsa Akina Executive Secretary
Sharrah Akina Sweeper
Leslie Alder Food Services Worker
Sharla Allred Lunch Monitor
Linda Ames Aide, Vision
Elijah Angel Aide, Special Education
Karie Sant Balls Lunch Monitor
Brenda Barkle Registrar/Counseling Secretary
Luke Barkle Computer Aide
Maria Barton Aide, Alternative Middle School
Carolyn Bell Food Services Clerk
Joe Black Sweepers
Stan Bodily Aide, Quickstart
Mary Lou Bodrero Food Services Worker
Sherry Brown Food Services Worker
Veronica Cabrera Aide, Alternative Language Program
Roze Callan Writing Lab Coordinator
Lorie Chivers Aide, Severe
Linda Clark Food Services Worker
Raeleene Clawson Choral Accompanist
Marsha Cluff Food Services Worker
Susan Corless Food Services Worker
Glen Davidson Custodian
Paige Davis Aide, Copy Center

Larry Earl.....	Sweeper
Michael Ezola	Custodian
Valerie Gardner.....	Aide, Resource
Wendy Gessel	Aide, Media
Doug Gray.....	Sweepers
Amelia Gutke	Sweeper
Paul Gutke.....	Sweeper
Tessa Guy.....	Aide, Special Education
Sheila Hall	Food Services Worker
Paul Harris	Sweeper
Justin Howell	Files Manager – Special Services
Lisa Jensen.....	Attendance Secretary
Zerinda Kritz.....	Aide, Special Education
Cara Lindsey	District Computer Technician
Pauline Manwaring	Sweeper
Wendy Martinez.....	Financial Secretary
Dave Merrell	Sweeper
Ray Morris	Head Custodian
Christy Murdock.....	Aide, Resource
Courtney Nazer	Aide, Mountaineer Support Center
Carolyn Olsen	Food Services Worker
Gloria Olson.....	Food Services Manager
Mishelle Palmer	Food Services Worker
Kiara Parkinson.....	Aide, Special Services Specialist
Carolyn Pierce	Food Services Worker
Dakota Rich	Sweeper
Rosa Rojas	Lunch Monitor
Matthew Reiser	Aide, Mountaineer Support Center
Heather Schiffman	Sweeper
Katie Seamons	Aide, Mountaineer Support Center
Justin Smith.....	Aide, Special Services Specialist
Sharon Stoddard	Food Services Worker
Debbie Terry	Aide, Alternative Language Program
Wendy Whetten	ESL Community Liaison & Mentoring Program Coordinator
Officer Darin Williams	Resource Officer
Jackie Wilson	Food Services Worker
Natalie Woodward	Sweeper
Wes Woodward.....	Sweeper
Janice Wright	Food Services Worker

Faculty

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Bob Barlow
Julie Barlow
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Chazel Campbell
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Mark Dewey
Kim Downs
Gary Dunn
Janiece Edgington
Debbie Evans
Anita Feller
Jenni Firth
Pat Fullmer
April Godderidge
Lynn Greene
John Gregory

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Karin Hendricks
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Thane Hutchinson
Teri Jackson
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Annelie Johnson
Valerie Jorgensen
Becky Kendall
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Cherie Kircalli
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Blair Larsen
Daren Lentz
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Rick Maughan
Janice McAllister
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Anna Monsen
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Carol Nielsen
Marian Nielsen
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Jeanie Papiernik
Tricia Parker
Bryce Passey
Tiffany Pintor
Debby Piquet
Marian Pittman
Chris Rasmussen
Steve Reeder
Dave Rose
JoAnna Seely
Christian Sigg
Betty Simper
Kelly Sorensen
Ed Taggart
Sarah Timmins
Brent Tubbs
John Westenskow
Diana Willis
Scott Wright

MOUNT LOGAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Mount Logan Middle School is to engage students in learning experiences that will foster confident, self-directed, lifelong learners.

BELIEF STATEMENTS

The program at Mount Logan Middle School will place emphasis on intellectual stimulation, acquisition of knowledge, the socialization process, the development of values and beliefs, and the acceptance of students' growing needs for independence and self-reliance through the following beliefs:

1. A safe and physically comfortable environment promotes student learning.
2. Student learning is the chief priority for the school.
3. Teachers, administrators, parents, and the community share the responsibility for advancing the school's mission.
4. Each student is a valued individual with unique physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs.
5. The commitment to continuous improvement is imperative if our school is going to enable students to become confident, self-directed, lifelong learners.
6. Students learn and test best when they have appropriate opportunities for success and are actively engaged in the learning process.
7. Students learn in different ways and should be provided with a variety of instructional approaches to support their learning.

MEMBERS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Lori Gardner, Hunter Junior High School, Granite School District, Visiting Team
Chairperson

Nancy Anderson, Millcreek Junior High, Davis School District

Darci Barney, Tooele Junior High, Tooele School District

Kim Heap, Tooele Junior High, Tooele School District

Debbie Herget, Oquirrh Hills Middle, Jordan School District

Doreen Pilling, Kaysville Junior High, Davis School District

Kendall Topham, Tooele Junior High, Tooele School District

VISITING TEAM REPORT

MOUNT LOGAN MIDDLE SCHOOL

CHAPTER 1: SCHOOL PROFILE

Mount Logan Middle School has an 80-year history, beginning as a junior high as part of Logan High School. Originally the school served seventh and eighth grade students and later included the ninth grade. In 1963 a new building opened, and in 1983 the ninth grade was moved to Logan High School. The school was then renamed Mount Logan Middle School.

Mount Logan Middle School has a student population of 1,243 in grades six through eight. The school is a reflection of the increasing diversity of the area, with 71 percent of the students being Caucasian and 29 percent of various ethnic minorities, the largest being Hispanic (22%). Fifty percent of students receive free or reduced-price lunch.

Principal Dan Johnson has been at the school since 1990. There are two assistant principals, three counselors, and 72 teachers. The staff is composed of five clerical assistants and 56 aides, custodians, food service workers, and other school support assistants. Students have benefited from the commitment on the part of the Logan Board of Education to keep classes small and provide comprehensive services. Due to district and community support, along with Principal Johnson's commitment to procure what students need through grants, the school offers programs that are research based, and has developed a community of learning where there are multiple opportunities for students to develop skills and talents.

a) *What significant findings were revealed by the school's analysis of its profile?*

The school has experienced an overall decline in student population while its composition is becoming more ethnically diverse. A sizable percentage of students come from economically disadvantaged families, as indicated by free and reduced-price lunch percentages and mobility factors. The staff has addressed these issues by providing support programs and personnel to aid struggling students. Daily attendance is high (94%), and the school closely monitors school attendance. Almost 50 percent of the students have made the honor roll, while the level of academic rigor has increased.

The school profile validates the comprehensive efforts made by the school to enhance students' literacy and numeracy skills. The majority of students (67%) read on grade level, and the school has instituted programs to address reading deficiencies as well as track student development. The profile clearly defines the gaps in achievement, and the use of this data has served as a catalyst for school improvement. Eighty-one percent of students demonstrated proficiency on math

CRTs for 2005, with significant gains made in all reported groups. The school has used testing data to develop a program for students that serves to provide remediation within the context of the school day without eliminating elective options.

Mount Logan Middle School used the comprehensive battery of NSSE surveys as part of its profile. The results indicate a high level of satisfaction with the school on the part of all stakeholders. The school has spent considerable time developing a school environment where students are safe and appropriate behavior is taught and nurtured. The school profile defined components of a “pyramid of interventions,” and the school uses a data collection system that allows for the comprehensive tracking of student behavior, interventions, and student progress.

b) *What modifications to the school profile should the school consider for the future?*

Mount Logan Middle School’s profile is somewhat difficult to read. As the document is to be an important means of communicating the school’s strengths and areas of needed improvement, a format that is easy to read is essential. Many of the charts and graphs contained such detail that the small font was problematic. The school profile could develop charts that track students over time without breaking down so many categories in one chart. Also, care needs to be given to the sizes of some ethnic groups to ensure that their privacy rights are maintained. While it is important for the school to know the achievement status of each and every student, because the size of some groups is so small, the identity of students is compromised.

Mount Logan Middle School is the only public middle school in the district, so the potential for comparison with other schools is limited. However, the profile should include a comparison of the school’s test scores with those in the state. The school may also want to include science CRTs and the Direct Writing Assessment as a means of evaluating student progress.

Suggested Areas for Further Inquiry:

- Correlate students’ academic success to reading ability, particularly for those students served in ESL programs.
- While the profile provided an anecdotal record of the improvement of school climate and student behavior, supportive data needs to be part of the profile.
- Explore the causal factors underlying the fact that 42 percent of discipline referrals are generated by a class of students representing 22 percent of the population.

CHAPTER 2: THE SELF-STUDY PROCESS

- a) *To what extent has the school community engaged in a collaborative self-study process on behalf of students?*

Mount Logan Middle School has used a continuous improvement model for several years. In 2003 the school completed an evaluative inquiry process based on the work of a noted organizational learning theorist. Since then, the school community has engaged in a yearly assessment of its progress involving the staff, faculty, and School Community Council. The self-study process required for accreditation involved many parents and students who actively engaged in compiling data, evaluating programs and practices, and developing the school's action plan. Teachers and support staff have been involved in the process, using the bulk of professional development time to assess the school's strengths and limitations and develop programs to support student success. The Visiting Team found a commitment on the part of every teacher to improve instructional practice to promote academic achievement. The work of the school represents the importance Principal Johnson attaches to developing a collaborative culture.

- b) *To what extent does the school's self-study accurately reflect the school's current strengths and limitations?*

Mount Logan's self-study skims the surface on presenting to the reader an accurate portrayal of the many programs of the school and their impact on student achievement. Aspects of the report suggest extensive study and dialogue. It is clear from the departmental analyses that teachers gave considerable attention to their strengths and to their focus on the desired results for student learning. The Visiting Team commends the school for the work that has been done up to this point.

The Visiting Team encourages the school to revise the school profile information to make it more useful to the reader. Organizing information in ways clear to stakeholders, showing progress over time, and fully describing the programs that serve students will give readers a better understanding of the substantial service the school provides to students and the community.

CHAPTER 3: INSTRUCTIONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Mount Logan Middle School's desired results for student learning and performance indicators are as follows:

1. Effective Communication
 - Uses appropriate methods to communicate with others
 - Responds appropriately when receiving communication
2. Complex Thinking
 - Demonstrates a variety of thinking processes
 - Integrates new information with existing knowledge and experience
 - Applies thinking skills strategically
3. Effective Collaboration
 - Understands and serves in a variety of roles
 - Facilitates groups effectively
 - Uses resources effectively
 - Works with a variety of populations
 - Responds appropriately to complex relationships
4. Responsible Citizenship
 - Demonstrates individual responsibility
 - Practices a healthy lifestyle
 - Understands and promotes the democratic principles of freedom, justice, and equality
 - Participates in activities that promote the public good
5. Lifelong Learning
 - Initiates own learning
 - Achieves high standards of literacy
 - Manages information
 - Demonstrates aesthetic awareness

Shared Vision, Beliefs, Mission, and Goals:

- a) *To what extent did the school facilitate a collaborative process to build a shared vision for the school (mission) that defines a compelling purpose and direction for the school?*

The school community has done an excellent job articulating a shared vision for the school. Parents, students, teachers and staff worked together to develop a mission statement that is clear, concise, and compelling.

The mission statement and beliefs are posted in all areas of the school, in an attractive way that speaks to the fact that they are incorporated into the daily fabric of school activities. The mission statement and beliefs have also been shared with the community through PTSA and School Community Council meetings and newsletters.

- b) *To what extent has the school defined a set of beliefs that reflect the commitment of the administration and staff to support student achievement and success?*

Teachers and staff members share a sense of purpose regarding the academic achievement of all students that is recognized and appreciated by students and parents. The Visiting Team commends the Mount Logan Middle School community for developing a mission and beliefs that articulate the commitment the school has to the positive development of healthy, successful citizens of the community.

- c) *To what extent do the school's mission and beliefs align to support the school's desired results for student learning (DRSLs)?*

The alignment of the Mount Logan Middle School's mission and beliefs to its desired results for student learning (DRSLs) is very clear. Every room of the school has a beautiful plaque on which the mission, beliefs, and DRSLs are inscribed. Not only are the DRSLs prominently featured throughout the building, but it was also evident to the Visiting Team that the DRSLs have become embedded in everyday instruction. Teachers have incorporated instructional strategies that explicitly teach the skills required for each DRSL; have developed, field-tested and incorporated assessments aligned to achievement objectives for each DRSL; have collected student work to serve as anchors and models for the assessments; and are developing a reporting system to communicate the mastery of DRSLs to stakeholder groups.

The Visiting Team commends Mount Logan Middle School for the effort and commitment that has gone into the incorporation of professional practice that is research based and which has served to incorporate the DRSLs as a school-wide focus for students' outcomes which drives instruction and assessment.

Curriculum Development:

- a) *To what extent does the staff work collaboratively to ensure the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and the Utah Core Curriculum (with inclusion of the Utah Life Skills)?*

There is substantial evidence that the curriculum is based on clearly defined standards and that it focuses on the essential knowledge and skills necessary for

students to excel. The staff has been extensively trained in using proven models for lesson development which are guided by the learner outcomes. Each teacher has been working to adapt, remodel, or replace old lesson plans with plans based on the “Standards-Based Design” model, with an emphasis on enduring understanding.

The Visiting Team has found that teachers within departments have done extensive planning together and have aligned their curricula so that all students are receiving similar experiences and exposure to the Utah State Core Curriculum standards (including the Utah Life Skills). Furthermore, there is evidence of collaboration across curriculum with the school-wide emphasis on writing in all subjects, the implementation of grade clusters, and the mini-teaching done by all during the first period RAP.

The success of curriculum development and implementation is indicated by the high student achievement on state and national criterion-referenced tests, high academic achievement, annual yearly progress, and overall student performance in the classroom.

The Visiting Team recommends that more time be made available for continued collaboration and planning, and that opportunities for more rigorous learning be made available for higher-level students.

- b) To what extent does the teaching staff work collaboratively to support the development of a curriculum that focuses on the school's desired results for student learning?*

The desired results for student learning have been clearly defined and assessed through collaborative process during the past two years. There is evidence that the DRSLs have been widely embraced as an integral part of Mount Logan’s continued improvement and growth; they are visible in every classroom, in the front office, on student bookmarks, in the halls, on the school’s website, and on materials that go home to parents. Mount Logan has begun implementing and incorporating these DRSLs into the curriculum by selecting one DRSL a year to focus on. The faculty then collaboratively develops strategies for teaching and integrating it into classroom instruction. Next year’s focus will be on responsible citizenship, which also is part of the Utah Life Skills. Additionally, the school has also put into place opportunities for re-assessment and evaluation of the work done in the Summer Institute sponsored by the school, which includes approximately a third of the faculty.

Quality Instructional Design:

- a) To what extent does the professional staff design and implement a variety of learning experiences that actively engage students?*

Mount Logan Middle School teachers focus on providing students with hands-on, relevant learning appropriate to the cognitive and social needs of young adolescents. Learning experiences are relevant and are often interconnected across subject areas. The Visiting Team found evidence that teachers work together to provide powerful teaching and learning experiences that are creative, grounded in the Core, and clearly focused on what students should know and be able to do at the end of the lesson. Using the “backwards design” model, teachers articulate the “what, why, and how” of the learning activity for their students. Many classrooms have the learner outcomes and objectives posted so the students know what is expected of them daily.

The Visiting Team observed teachers using cooperative learning groups, the Socratic Method, lecture/question instruction, modeling, visual aids, and student presentations using technology such as Smart Boards, student projects, experiments, simulations, and hands-on activities. The Visiting Team also observed effective classroom management and organizational strategies.

Small class sizes allow teachers to personalize and differentiate instruction. Strategies employed have had considerable success with special education, LEP or struggling students. There is great emphasis on the use of technology; the school has many computer labs, and students are provided routine opportunities to use technology for research, application of learning, and presentations. Students and parents report that teachers spend hours outside of the classroom working with students and providing multiple opportunities for student success. One student said, “I like my science class because when I am doing experiments and walk out of class, I catch myself saying, ‘WOW! I didn’t know that.’”

- b) *To what extent does the professional staff employ a variety of instructional strategies to ensure the needs of different learners are met?*

Mount Logan Middle School focuses on providing equal access to opportunity for all students. Special education and LEP students are mainstreamed to the greatest extent possible. Over a quarter of the faculty holds English as Second Language endorsements. Teachers routinely consult with special education teachers. Teachers provide students with help before and after school, and almost all teachers keep up-to-date web pages to inform students and parents. Several students reported that teachers work diligently to provide multiple learning opportunities both in and outside of class. Evidence of this can be seen in the high percentage of students with above average grades, and in the high percentage of participation in after-school programs. The Visiting Team commends the degree to which teachers spend hours of unpaid time on behalf of students.

One concern articulated by teachers, students, and parents was that, with the attention given to struggling students, the needs of those who are gifted or accelerated are sometimes ignored. The school reported that it will spend time

next year studying differentiated curricula and instruction to better meet the needs of diverse learners. The Visiting Team recommends that significant attention be given to the needs of accelerated learners.

- c) *To what extent do the professional staff and leadership provide additional opportunities which support student learning?*

Mount Logan Middle School has something for everyone. Through its 21st Century Community Learning Center programs, over 30 different activities are open to students. Teachers make a concerted effort to connect the curriculum with enrichment opportunities through such activities as History Fair, Math Counts, and the Foreign Language Fair. Students reported that if they had an idea for a club and could find a sponsor on the staff, then Principal Johnson would approve it.

The Visiting Team commends the school for its commitment to serving the youth and the community.

Quality Assessment Systems:

- a) *To what extent has the staff developed classroom or school-wide assessments based on clearly articulated expectations for student achievement?*

Mount Logan Middle School has devoted considerable effort to developing classroom and school-wide assessments with clearly articulated expectations for student achievement. Once the DRSLs with indicators were defined, the school started with the DRSL for “Effective Communicator” and developed a rubric that could be used across the curriculum. Teachers collected student work for analysis and determined anchors for scoring and to serve as models. Teachers were also given extensive professional development opportunities, allowing them to develop instructional strategies to explicitly teach the skills to be assessed. After two years, teachers report that they use the rubric in every subject area. The school is in the process of testing a scoring tool for the DRSL of “Critical Thinker.”

The Visiting Team found evidence in many classrooms that teachers had been revamping lesson plans, starting with defined assessments. The Visiting Team commends the school for its studied approach at developing and implementing school-wide assessments.

- b) *To what extent are assessments of student learning developed using methods that reflect the intended purpose and performance standards?*

Mount Logan Middle School teachers report that since they have studied the backwards design method of lesson development, there is much greater attention

given to using methods that accurately assess the intended core objective. Teachers have moved away from simply using pencil-and-paper tests to incorporating assessments that are aligned with the instructional approach. The increased use of rubrics has provided opportunity for self and peer review. The Visiting Team found widespread use of journals, and students report that writing for a purpose is common in every class. Parents and students report that for the most part, the purpose of assessments is clearly defined and communicated to students and parents.

- c) *To what extent are assessments designed, developed, and used in a fair and equitable manner?*

The Visiting Team found that in many classrooms, performance standards and criteria for student work are established and shared with students and parents. The administration has set the standard that individual growth is to be cultivated and celebrated. The school has discontinued the use of “D” grades and has developed many strategies and programs to help those who are not reaching their potential. Teachers report that they meet regularly in departments and occasionally across grade levels to examine student work and discuss types of assessments and the evaluation of student work.

The Visiting Team commends the faculty’s commitment to developing means of assessments that are congruent to the learning objectives. The Visiting Team recommends that the faculty continue to evaluate the data to ensure that students are achieving individual growth independent of group norms (i.e., exploring the academic growth and success rates of members of ethnic groups).

Leadership for School Improvement:

- a) *To what extent does the school leadership promote quality instruction by fostering an academic learning climate and actively supporting teaching and learning?*

The administration clearly promotes the importance of teaching and learning. Principal Johnson stated that he is committed to “hiring the best people, training them, and trusting them.” Given this high level of trust, the staff is empowered to make necessary and appropriate decisions to provide quality instruction to all students. Teachers feel supported in their efforts, and student success is celebrated. The Visiting Team found that the school leadership promotes quality instruction by providing professional learning opportunities and the necessary resources for improvement. Leaders model professional behavior, and in return the staff has complete confidence in the leadership abilities of the administration.

Mr. Johnson has articulated a vision for the school that has been embraced by the people he works with and by the community. Faculty members have committed hundreds of uncompensated hours toward school improvement because they truly

believe in the power of change and have seen the results. While the administration has taken on additional responsibilities to free up time for collaboration, the Visiting Team encourages Logan School District to implement regular time during the course of the school week for collaboration.

- b) *To what extent does the school leadership employ effective decision making that is data-driven, research-based, and collaborative?*

Mr. Johnson makes decisions based on an understanding of research and effective practice. Through his efforts, professional learning has been in depth and facilitated by recognized leaders. Every program brought into the school has been thoroughly considered on the basis of research and studied practice. As the school has advanced on its course of continuous improvement, attention has been given to data collection and review. The commitment to using data in shaping decisions and practice led to the adoption of a comprehensive student accounting system for the school, which will help the school track the progress of every student in many different areas.

Decision making is a collaborative venture involving staff, parents, and students. The PTSA Board and School Community Council are heavily involved with the school and provide feedback and direction in meaningful ways. The administration involves the faculty in yearly planning through an annual Summer Institute. Attendees spend a week assessing the prior year's progress and determine a course of action for the coming year. The group varies from year to year based on the focus of the school's work, and attendees provide the leadership for school-wide change.

- c) *To what extent does the school leadership monitor progress in student achievement and instructional effectiveness through a comprehensive assessment system and continuous reflection?*

The school leadership monitors progress in student achievement through review of core test results, standards-based curricula, and the Six Traits of Writing rubric. Student work is evaluated on a regular basis. Parents and students are provided with progress grades every three weeks. The new student grading system allows for parents to be notified automatically by e-mail when students reach certain grade levels.

Teachers have been asked to submit to the administration one unit of study developed using the standards-based design. For many of the teachers, this has led to a wholesale revision of their curriculum. As the school has implemented the rubrics associated with the DRSLs, regular time has been allocated for review and alignment.

- d) *To what extent does the school leadership provide skillful stewardship by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources of the school for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment?*

Through the procurement of grants and the support of the school district, much has been done to make the physical plant warm and inviting. The custodial staff does an excellent job, and students take pride in their school.

The school leadership provides a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment by promoting a commitment from each staff member to be actively and consistently engaged in improving the environment and climate of the school. Some staff members are part of a Bullying Prevention Team to help train students and staff in ways to handle and reduce bullying incidents. A Safety Committee provides training for all school emergency issues. The Visiting Team observed teachers standing at their doors and monitoring the hallways during passing times. This was reported as standard procedure.

The Visiting Team did hear from students that some places in the building were perceived to be safer than others. The Visiting Team recommends that the staff study areas of the building to ensure that, where large groups congregate, adequate adult supervision is available.

- e) *To what extent does the school leadership make decisions related to the allocation and use of resources which align with the school goals, the achievement of the DRSLs, and school improvement efforts?*

School-wide policies and operational procedures are consistent with the school's mission. Teachers are given all that they need in terms of technology, materials, and resources to be effective. The school is organized for student and staff success in achieving the school's goals.

Considerable effort and resources are directed toward the professional learning that is necessary for the school to move forward. Professional learning is differentiated and provided throughout the year. Resources have been provided to embed learning into practice.

Extensive attention is given to "at-risk" students by following a "pyramid of interventions" model. This model includes IEPs, mentoring programs, Quick Start, Mountaineer Academy, and alternative schools, and concludes with homebound instruction. Grant funding has provided for mentors, pull-out programs, after-school programs, and family outreach services.

- f) *To what extent does the school leadership empower the school community and encourage commitment, participation, collaboration, and shared responsibility for student learning?*

The administrative team empowers the school community to become involved in the school and share responsibility for student learning. The School Community Council and the PTSA are active and provide input for school improvement decisions that is seriously considered by the administration and staff. Change is **not** feared in this school community. In fact, it is considered necessary for positive improvements. The principal is knowledgeable about current research practices concerning what works and why. This information is shared with all stakeholders.

Principal Johnson promotes teacher and counselor leadership in the school. All faculty members and dozens of student and parents were active participants on the focus groups. Their input has been valued and has provided the administration with a clear direction for future action.

Community Building:

- a) *To what extent does the school foster community building and working relationships within the school?*

Mount Logan Middle School has worked hard to support the community through positive working relationships that are established among students, teachers, support staff, and administrators. The school's dedication to creating and supporting a learning environment for students that nurtures a sense of caring and belonging is evident in every facet of the school.

As part of its action plan, Mount Logan will create smaller learning communities through the development of integrated teams of teachers. The hesitation in incorporating the teaming structure has been out of concern for the viability of elective programs. The Visiting Team encourages the development of teaming formats that allow for student choice while creating **smaller learning communities of students**, helping them form positive relationships with their peers. This aspect of teaming will become increasingly important as the student body continues to diversify.

Students reported that while there appears to be little divisiveness among groups and the adults are quick to address issues of race or bullying, little attention is given to the growing differences between those of the dominant culture of the community and those with differing backgrounds or values. The Visiting Team recommends that the faculty engage in discussion regarding ways in which cultural differences may be bridged as they teach tolerance and respect.

- b) *To what extent does the school extend the school community through collaborative networks that support student learning?*

Mount Logan Middle School actively engages parents and families as partners in the learning process through a variety of programs, resources, and instructional materials. Outreach opportunities are created through partnerships with companies and programs in the community. Principal Johnson has actively recruited Hispanic parents and staff members to serve as liaisons with parents and community agencies. He reaches the Hispanic community by going to places where they are comfortable, like workplaces, and bridging the gaps so that when they come to the school they are received warmly and feel welcome and valued.

The school is used as a community center, maintaining after-school and summer programs. Programs are developed to engage the support and participation of parents. Business support is solicited and the school emphasizes the need for volunteers, providing them with meaningful ways to contribute to the school.

Mount Logan partners with Utah State University to provide enrichment opportunities for middle school students and service-learning opportunities for college students. Due to its proximity, the school provides many pre-service activities for teaching candidates. Mount Logan's GEAR UP grant will allow the school to foster the possibility of college education for more of its at-risk students.

Culture of Continuous Improvement and Learning:

- a) *To what extent does the school build skills and the capacity for improvement through comprehensive and ongoing professional development programs focused on the school's goals for improvement?*

Mount Logan Middle School's organizational system and culture stress the commitment to continuous improvement and provides strong support for school reform and professional development. This strength is evident in the widespread support of faculty and staff for staff development as they have studied and implemented best practices in a variety of areas, including Standards-Based Design/Understanding by Design, Unpacking the Standards, the Six Traits of Writing, and Love and Logic, as well as allocating some time allocation for inter- and intra-departmental collaboration. This time has been generated by creative scheduling during assemblies, extending staff development time, and shortening the school day to provide four half-days of school-wide collaboration. Teachers also spend many hours beyond contract time to participate in staff development opportunities and to collaborate among themselves.

The professional development programs for staff members focus directly on the knowledge and skills required to fulfill the performance expectations for their roles and to contribute to the achievement of the school's goals for improvement. Validated, research-based principles of high-performing schools serve as the primary focus of professional development programs. Educational consultants

were hired and worked directly with the school/faculty as Standards-Based Design was presented, implemented, and assessed.

Extensive follow-up support and coaching is provided. Mount Logan Middle School has worked diligently to build skills that foster improvement and change. Teachers can participate in professional development via in-service instruction at the school and district levels, as well as by going outside the school and/or district to attend workshops and receive professional development instruction.

Collaboration and communication are happening within and across all content areas. The creative scheduling that provides some degree of time allocation for inter- and intra-departmental collaboration has been paramount in giving teachers an opportunity to communicate with one another about student needs, sharing ideas about effective teaching strategies, curriculum, and instruction.

The Visiting Team commends Mount Logan Middle School for the extensive professional development and collaboration among faculty members that is part of the overall climate of the school and is recognized by all stakeholders. This extensive professional development has been driven by data and the goals for student improvement. The Mount Logan Middle School administration is also to be commended for the creative scheduling emphasis that has provided additional time for school-wide collaboration. These priorities are driven by the genuine desire of MLMS for ongoing school improvement and lifelong learning.

b) To what extent does the school create conditions that support productive change and continuous improvement?

The Visiting Team found that Mount Logan Middle School provides extensive training and support for the school's stakeholders to develop a deep understanding of the change process and its implications for the work of the school in its commitment to continuous improvement. The change process is embraced by all stakeholders and is an integral part of the school. Mount Logan Middle School has been deeply engaged in the change process for the more than six years.

The school provides comprehensive and ongoing support for the work of individuals and groups responsible for implementing school improvement initiatives. There is significant evidence to suggest that the administration not only supports, but creates new ideas and directions that target continuous improvement and productive change that is based on school data. The administration sponsors a Summer Institute each summer wherein the school leadership team for the upcoming school year receives extensive instruction on the identified data-driven goal(s) for the upcoming school year. This school leadership team then acts as mentors/leaders as the faculty implements the goal(s). This will play out once again during the 2006-2007 school year, with the implementation of smaller learning communities and the incorporation of the "Critical Thinker" performance assessments.

The school sustains the commitment to continuous improvement and renewal. There is significant data and anecdotal evidence of the school's perseverance in "staying the course" despite obstacles and/or set-backs in the school improvement process. The Visiting Team was left with the belief that Mount Logan's faculty, staff, parents, and students have abundant energy and the perseverance to pursue and realize the future they envision.

CHAPTER 4: NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF ACCREDITED SCHOOLS (NAAS) STANDARDS I-XI

Standard I—Educational Program

This standard is met. Mount Logan Middle School's instructional and organizational practices, as well as its policies and procedures, support the desired results for student learning and prepare students to succeed in a culturally diverse, democratic society.

Standard II—Student Personnel Services

This standard is met. Student personnel services are designed to give systematic assistance to students. The assigned personnel for guidance includes a minimum of one full-time person for each 400 students enrolled.

Standard III—School Plant and Equipment

This standard is met. The school plant provides for a variety of instructional activities and programs and incorporates aesthetic features that contribute to a positive educational atmosphere.

Standard IV—Library Media Program

This standard is met. The school library media program is a primary resource for literacy, information, and curriculum support. A certified library media teacher provides instruction, resources, and activities to promote independent use of ideas and information.

Standard V—Records

This standard is met. Student records are maintained, handled, and protected in the best interests of students and parents. Students and parents have the right to access personal student records and are ensured the privacy of such, as guaranteed by federal legislation.

Standard VI—School Improvement (This is addressed in the self-study.)

This standard is met. The school improvement plan focuses on the total school rather than each of the separate components within the school.

Standard VII—Preparation of Personnel

This standard is met. All professional personnel are in compliance with the licensing requirements of the state of Utah and are properly endorsed for the subjects they are assigned.

Standard VIII—Administration

This standard is met. The administration of Mount Logan Middle School provides educational leadership, supervises and coordinates programs, and carries out the necessary administrative procedures.

Standard IX—Teacher Load

This standard is met. The total number of students instructed by any one teacher in any one grading period does not exceed numbers set by the Utah State Office of Education and/or Northwest.

Standard X—Activities

This standard is met. Mount Logan Middle School supports a range of activities that supplement the basic instructional program by providing additional experiences and opportunities for learning to take place.

Standard XI—Business Practices

This standard is met. The school is financially responsible. Proper budgetary procedures and generally accepted accounting principles are followed for all school funds. The school's advertising and promotional literature are completely truthful and ethical.

CHAPTER 5: SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS – ACTION PLAN

- a) *To what extent is the school-wide action plan adequate in addressing the critical areas for follow-up?*

Mount Logan Middle School's action plan was developed after careful review of the comprehensive NSSE surveys, focus group reports, departmental analyses, school profile data, and progress on goals developed in the school's previous PRAXIS study. Major areas addressed in the action plan include:

- Home and school communication.
- Numeracy and literacy.
- Staff development.
- Collaboration time.
- Pyramid of interventions.

The rationale for the goals is reasonable and the action steps are feasible. The action plan is comprehensive in scope, focusing on sustaining the work that has already been initiated through further training and the allocation of time for collaboration.

- b) *To what extent is there sufficient commitment to the action plan, school-wide and system-wide?*

The administration and leadership of the school have worked to generate commitment to the action plan. The faculty is fully supportive, as are parent groups. It is clear that Mr. Johnson has the support of the Logan School Board. The plan is not a departure from prior school improvement efforts, but an outline for the continuation and elaboration of work that has been initiated in the past three years.

Since much of the success of the plan relies on increased time for professional learning and collaboration, the school will need to inform parents and the community of how much work is currently done without compensation, and how important time is to the goal of school improvement.

- c) *How sound does the follow-up process that the school intends to use for monitoring the accomplishments of the school-wide action plan appear to be?*

The school has developed a systematic and ongoing process for collecting data and evidence of students' levels of performance in the target goal areas. The use of Pinnacle software will enable the school to establish a considerable database defining individual student achievement and progress in more subjective areas such as discipline.

Teachers are increasingly more proficient in analyzing student work as a means of assessing professional practice. As they continue to collaborate in this way, the Visiting Team is confident that the use of rubrics and teacher-made assessments will provide the information they need to assess their efforts.

CHAPTER 6: MAJOR COMMENDATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE VISITING TEAM

Commendations:

- The Visiting Team commends the school-wide commitment to implementing standards-based units of study, which serve to focus on the core or essence of what is to be learned. Teachers have spent considerable time and effort revising their curricula. This effort has provided clear information to students and parents about learning objectives, as well as provided teachers with clear means to assess student learning.
- The Visiting Team commends the faculty and administration of Mount Logan Middle School, who have developed a culture of continuous improvement that has been cultivated by staff development opportunities that have provided the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to have a profound effect on student learning. The administration has worked to concentrate blocks of time, and has provided resources so that teachers can work on continuous improvement. Teachers have dedicated hundreds of hours over the last three years to implementing what they have learned. Together, the faculty and staff have created a culture of lifelong learning.
- At Mount Logan Middle School, student achievement, success, and well-being are central to the mission and beliefs, and also to the daily work of every adult employed at the school. Parents and community members have good reason for their faith and confidence that young adolescents will thrive there. The Visiting Team commends this dedication to students.
- The Logan District School Board must be commended for its commitment to direct resources to keeping class sizes low. The work of teachers has been advanced by the ability to provide students with individual attention in the context of heterogeneous classes. The smaller learning communities the school seeks to create will be enhanced by class sizes that are manageable.

Recommendations:

- The Visiting Team recommends that more time be dedicated to advancing Mount Logan Middle School's mission and the school reform efforts currently in place. Teachers need regular time, weekly if not daily, to collaborate and create smaller learning communities where the curriculum is presented in ways which provide integration of subject matter. Time for teaming within departments and among grade level teachers is one of the essential components of effective middle-level schools. Taking the school where it aspires to be—a place where every student

has multiple opportunities for success, where students are safe and feel connected to adults and peers, and where learning is differentiated to meet the needs and interests of individuals—takes time.

- The school has plans to develop expertise in differentiating curricula. In doing so, the Visiting Team strongly recommends that attention be given to addressing the needs of gifted or high-ability learners. The school has done an excellent job addressing the needs of struggling learners, and while many teachers attempt to layer the curriculum to provide diverse opportunities for students, many reported that they were often bored, or frustrated at being given “extra work” after finishing an assignment early. Providing means within the school day to meet the needs of gifted learners will enhance opportunities for all students.
- As the student body reflects the increasing diversity of the community, the school must continue to address issues of tolerance and respect. It is recommended that the school continue to celebrate the cultural heritage of its diverse ethnic groups while finding ways to accentuate the common values of all humans. Particular attention needs to be given to religious tolerance, as many students reported that while racist and ethnic remarks are not tolerated, religious slurs or negative comments are too often ignored. The Visiting Team recommends that just as the school has worked on bullying, it needs to help students appreciate and respect cultural diversity.